



The countryside charity
Rutland



Rutland Branch of CPRE

Annual Report for 2019/20

Registered Charity Number 500480

Introduction

Welcome to CPRE Rutland's Annual Report for 2019/20. We have been unable to hold our AGM this year, due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions but, otherwise, you will find here the Chairman's report on activities since the previous AGM, together with the Finance Report for 2019 and a current list of the officers and committee members of the branch.

If you have any comments or questions on this report, please direct them in the first instance to our Administrative Officer, Geoff Clyde.



Chairman's Report

By any measure, this has been a truly exceptional year. CPRE nationally has now rolled out the new branding, as previewed at last year's AGM, and in this, our 50th Anniversary year, the Rutland branch has embarked on a major project, Rutland 2036. At the time of writing, the Local Plan Consultation is under way, as is the Government's consultation on major reforms to the planning system. We do, however, now have our own web-site and social media presence. All of this has, of course, been overshadowed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, which has disrupted and delayed many activities, including the Rutland Local Plan, and we have had to postpone this year's AGM due to the ongoing restrictions. We have, nonetheless, managed to continue working with various online meetings and so on.

National CPRE

The new branding, 'CPRE The Countryside Charity', has now been fully established. This is embodied in the new national web-site, on which the Rutland Branch now has its own page.

Management of the many volunteers in the organisation is now facilitated by a system called Assemble, on which vacancies can be advertised and individual details maintained. We have already had some success with this, with a new Planning Assistant volunteer identified for the branch.

Planning remains at the forefront of CPRE's activities. Although there is clearly still a serious need for more houses, the latest figures suggest that there are currently around 1.5 million sites, on brownfield registers, or with planning permission but not yet built, or both. Despite these figures, the government is keen to make the planning system more streamlined and simpler to follow and to achieve its target of building 300,000 homes every year, and so has proposed major changes, detailed in three consultation documents:

- Planning White Paper – 'Planning for the Future'
- Changes to the planning system
- Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control.

CPRE will be submitting detailed responses to the first two, to include inputs from local branches. Although the intention behind many of the changes is welcome, there are key areas of concern, including:

- There is a need to accelerate building not planning – there are currently around one million planning permissions not completed, double the 2016 figure.



- The government's target of building 300,000 homes per year is not supported by population growth statistics.
- The revised housing needs formula seems to be designed to achieve the 300,000 target rather than to meet locally determined needs and seriously distorts provision in rural areas; the need for Rutland, for instance, would increase from around 150 to 307 houses per annum.
- There is still too little emphasis on affordability.
- Opportunities for community engagement will be diminished.

In support of the consultation, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, MP, asked to meet with CPRE to hear views on the proposals. All branches were represented at the second of these meetings, which gives a strong indication of the esteem in which the organisation is held at government level.

Climate Change is also a key issue for CPRE and now firmly on the national agenda. A new national policy has been developed, covering Energy, Transport, Housing, and Land Use and Agriculture; this is now informing campaigning in many other areas. Related to this, our Regeneration Manifesto was launched earlier this year, building on the growing realisation of the importance of green spaces in all our lives. Campaigning continues on other topics, including litter and the deposit return scheme, rewilding and so on.

Branch Level Activities

Rutland 2036

I announced last year that, following our campaign strategy workshop, we planned to submit a bid to CPRE's Strategic Collaboration Fund. This bid was successful, and we were awarded a grant of £28,000 to conduct a one year project which would:

- Create a statement of vision for Rutland
- Develop and pilot a housing needs survey
- Provide professional support in responding to the Rutland Local Plan consultation
- Evaluate the related environmental aspects.

A small uplift was provided from East Midlands regional funds to allow a more detailed assessment of the many issues crossing our borders.

We have so far received half of the grant and are now about half way through the project, which was launched at a well-attended public meeting in February. The meeting was

supported by CPRE's Chief Executive, Crispin Truman, and the then Head of Planning and Land Use, Matt Thomson, who both joined the panel of speakers. We have since held two more engagement sessions, online, to gather local views on the vision for the county and in support of the Local Plan consultation response.

The housing needs survey has been produced and distributed around residents in Uppingham; we have had a good response to this pilot exercise and the results are currently being analysed. After refinement, we hope to be able to roll the survey out much more widely, to allow local communities to determine their housing needs locally. The survey has been well supported by Rutland County Council.

Rutland Local Plan

The so-called Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan was approved by Rutland County Council in February for public consultation but this was then delayed by the pandemic restrictions. The consultation was eventually opened at the end of August and is due to close on 6th November. As our experience of the pandemic will clearly have a lasting and possibly significant impact on our way of life going forward, I and others did urge the Council to defer the consultation in order to review the plan in the light of this experience, but this was rejected.

While we remain unhappy with some of the plan policies, particularly around the proposed development at St George's Barracks, comments at this stage are restricted to matters of legal compliance and the statutory tests of soundness. Based on the professional opinions of the consultants working with us on our Rutland 2036 project, there are many reasons to suggest that the plan is unsound, as were outlined in the online sessions mentioned earlier; we are intending to discuss these concerns with the Council and to urge them to make changes to reduce the risk of the plan being rejected by the planning inspector when it goes forward to independent examination in Spring 2021, before its adoption due later that year.

Although Rutland County Council, in its latest Corporate Plan, has declared an intention to develop a 50-year Vision for Rutland, this work has not yet started, and the Local Plan is going forward without the benefit of any such statement of vision. We are, however, pleased to note that the council has expressed keenness to work with us in developing our vision statement, as part of the Rutland 2036 Project.

As regards the St George's Barracks proposals, CPRE Rutland's position remains that we would welcome the development of a new village, of the scale and character of many existing Rutland villages, but any larger scale housing development would definitely not be acceptable; this option has been rejected in the draft local plan, although we understand that a small scale development would actually be quite feasible without undertaking any significant infrastructure upgrade. We would also like to see some of the site being used for some rather more imaginative purpose, perhaps a technology park, agricultural college or possibly accommodation to support youth activities around Rutland Water, but something which would be an asset to the county in the future. There is no real evidence that any such options have been properly considered in drawing up the local plan, and this

is one of the issues we expect to raise in our response to the consultation.

Committee Changes

There have been a number of changes to the officers and membership of the committee over the year. Barbara Keene, for many years our vice-president, decided to step down from the role, and has been replaced by Patsy Clifton. We have also appointed Ron Simpson as a Vice-chair; Ron also leads the Rutland 2036 project. As you will have seen in previous years, we have struggled to find a reliable secretary; we have now resolved this by appointing Geoff Clyde as our Administrative Officer, a move which is working well for us. Further additions to the committee are Andrew Robinson, who also works with the PCLG and the F4R Campaign Group, and Annabelle Meek, who is looking after membership issues and helping to ensure more regular communication with members.

To streamline the running of the branch business, we have created an executive committee, comprising the Chair, Vice-chair(s), Treasurer and Administrative Officer, which now generally meets monthly in order to allow us to respond in a more timely fashion to key issues. We have also updated the branch constitution to reflect this and some other changes, including the authority to use internet banking; the new constitution will be circulated to members for formal approval at the next AGM.

Other Activities

The Rutland Round, created by John Williams, remains an important source of funding for us. Our thanks, as ever, go to John for his ongoing efforts in managing and promoting the walk and the accompanying booklet.

Once again, we ran a very successful Christmas Quiz, with a larger number of fully correct solutions than usual this year. Our thanks, as always, go to our quizmaster, Philip Riley, for his efforts to create such challenges every year. We are hoping to run the quiz much more online in future; this should increase the circulation as well as saving some of the significant administrative load in distributing the quiz and collecting the entrance fees.

In recognition of our 50th Anniversary, we extended invitations to our Annual Lunch to all members; a number joined the committee and enjoyed a very pleasant lunch at The Falcon in Uppingham, fortunately just prior to the start of lockdown. Our principal guest was Su Sayer, then the national chair of CPRE, who gave a most interesting speech, summarising the achievements of the branch over the 50 years of its existence, praising the Rutland Round, and noting the work of the poet John Clare and his celebration of rural life. We were also joined by the Lord Lieutenant and the then High Sheriff of Rutland, and the chairman of Rutland County Council.

I must also mention that we are fortunate to have received some significant donations to our funds this year, for which we are, of course, most grateful. Our sincere thanks go to the donors for their really generous support for our activities.

Membership

Our current membership now stands at 142; this is a significant increase, of over 20%, due, we believe, to the increased profile of the branch this year and, in particular, the efforts of some of the parishes. It also remains by far the highest membership per head of population of any CPRE county branch.

Looking Forward

In 2021, we expect to complete our project, Rutland 2036, with the publication of our Vision for Rutland, making the Housing Needs Survey available more widely, and having responded to the Local Plan consultation. The public examination of the Local Plan is scheduled for the middle of the year, and we should be involved in that inquiry. All being well, we would also hope to be able to hold our AGM more or less as we have in the past.

Finally, the committee and I again look forward to campaigning on your behalf in the year to come, to enhance, promote and protect the countryside of Rutland.

Malcolm Touchin
Chairman
CPRE Rutland

Finance Report

The Accounts for the year 2019 show an increase in income of £1185 due to a larger membership and the fact that the income from the Rutland Round book covers two years' sales.

The expense increase of £1860 is due to the purchase of 2000 Rutland Round books to be kept in stock for sale over the next few years and the extra expense incurred with increased attendance at meetings by our Chairman. This has been partly offset by the reduction in secretarial expenses as a result of administration changes.

The balance in the bank on 31st December 2019 remains healthy at £9050.51. We continue to bank with HSBC and, following the agreement of the members, we have now established an internet banking facility.

The Rutland 2036 Project grant and expenditure, and the donations mentioned by the Chairman in his report, will appear in the accounts for 2020.

Our trustees registered with the Charity Commission at 31st December 2019 are M Touchin, J Geer, P Clifton, J Williams and C Cartwright.

Judy Geer
Hon. Treasurer
CPRE Rutland



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Rutland

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND - RUTLAND BRANCH

Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2019

<u>Income & Expenditure Account</u>	<u>Year to</u>	<u>Year to</u>
	<u>31/12/2019</u>	<u>31/12/2018</u>
INCOME		
Subscriptions : Branch Share	2182.59	1806.70
Fundraising & Sales		
Rutland Round	711.80	
Christmas Quiz	<u>404.96</u>	<u>307.88</u>
Donations		4.00
Bank Interest	10.83	5.80
Total Income	<u>3310.18</u>	<u>2124.38</u>
EXPENSES		
Admin Officers Fees	180.00	945.00
Admin Expenses/Meetings	1710.40	650.36
Travel Expenses	495.45	560.45
AGM	32.72	30.84
Annual Lunch	228.50	286.05
Purchase of Rutland Round Books/Gates *	<u>1960.00</u>	<u>274.51</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>4607.07</u>	<u>2747.21</u>
Deficit(-)/Surplus	<u>-1296.89</u>	<u>-622.83</u>
<u>Balance Sheet as at: 31st December 2019</u>		
	<u>31/12/2019</u>	<u>31/12/2018</u>
Bank:		
Current Account & Petty Cash	3647.00	5032.72
Savings Account	5403.51	5392.68
Cheque not presented		78.00
Net Assets	<u>9050.51</u>	<u>10347.40</u>
Represented by:		
Reserves Brought Forward	10347.40	10970.23
Current Year Deficit/Surplus	-1296.89	-622.83
Reserves	<u>9050.51</u>	<u>10347.40</u>

***Note:** Stock is held at Nil value due to the uncertainty of the timing of future sales.

Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2019

I certify that I have examined the records of the CPRE – Rutland Branch presented to me, and found that the accounts are in accordance with the records for the period 1st January to 31st December 2019.

M. Ramsay Ross CA
Date: 28th January, 2020

Officers and Committee Members as at October 2020

Officers:

President: Sir Laurence Howard, KCVO OBE

Vice-President: Mrs Patsy Clifton

Committee Members (Trustees):

Chair: Malcolm Touchin (Trustee)

Vice-Chair: Ron Simpson, BEM (Trustee)

Hon. Treasurer: Judy Geer (Trustee)

Administrative Officer: Geoff Clyde

Members: John Williams (Trustee)

Carolyn Cartwright (Trustee)

Cliff Bacon

Annabelle Meek

Andrew Robinson